

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5497

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE

USDEL JEC PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC HI IMMEDIATE

USSAG NKP TH IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

AMCONSUL CIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

S E C R E T SAIGON 5198

EXDIS

WARNING-SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED/
NO FOREIGN DISSEMINATION

E.O. 11652: XGDS2. DECLASSIFICATION DATE IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE

TAGS: MOPS VS

SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF NVA OFFENSIVE--SUMMARY FOR PERIOD ENDING
NOON APRIL 17

1. GENERAL

(NOFORN) ACTIVITY IN MR3 CENTERED IN LONG
KHANH AND LONG AN PROVINCES, WITH THE REST OF THE
REGION GENERALLY QUIET. THE 3RD ARMORED CAVALRY,
ATTEMPTING TO REINFORCE THE 18TH DIVISION, WHICH
HAS TAKEN HEAVY CASUALTIES IN THE XUAN LOC FIGHTING
RECENTLY, WAS ATTACKED AND HAS SUFFERED THE LOSS OF UP TO
50 PC OF ITS ARMORED VEHICLES. (END NOFORN)

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THE SITUATION IN MR4 REMAINED ABOUT THE SAME DURING THE PAST 24 HOURS. ROUTE 4 IN DINH TUONG WAS CRATERED BY SHELLING AND TRAFFIC WAS INTERDICTED.

2. MR 3

(NOFORN) THE GVN SUFFERED WHAT MAY BE A CRITICAL LOSS IN FIGHTING AROUND XUAN LOC APRIL 17. THE 18TH ARVN DIVISION, WHICH HAS TAKEN HEAVY CASUALTIES IN THE FIGHTING THE LAST FEW DAYS, INCLUDING THE ROUT OF ELEMENTS OF THE 52ND REGT. APRIL 15, WAS RETREATING TO THE SOUTH OF XUAN LOC. THE 1ST AIRBORNE BRIGADE, WHICH HAD BEEN SUBJECTED TO A SHARP ATTACK THE EVENING OF APRIL 16, WAS MOVING NORTH TO REINFORCE THE 18TH. THE 3RD ARMORED CAVALRY, PREVIOUSLY LOCATED WEST OF XUAN LOC ON ROUTE 1 MOVED EAST TO REINFORCE AS WELL. THE ARMORED CAVALRY WAS ATTACKED BY AS YET UNIDENTIFIED UNITS OF NVA AND PRELIMINARY REPORTS INDICATE THAT AS MANY AS 50PC OF THEIR ARMORED VEHICLES MAY BE LOST. (END NOFORN)

IN OTHER ACTION IN THE XUAN LOC AREA, THE 3RD ARMORED BRIGADE IS MAKING NO PROGRESS IN ITS MOVE TO CLEAR ROUTE 1, ALTHOUGH IT CONTINUES TO OPERATE IN THAT AREA. THE NVA SHELLED AND ATTACKED THE 1ST AIRBORNE BRIGADE SEVERAL TIMES DURING APRIL 16, BUT THE AIRBORNE HELD ITS GROUND AND THE NVA DID NOT FOLLOW UP THEIR ATTACKS.

PRESSURE FROM BOTH LOCAL AND MAIN FORCE UNITS CONTINUES IN LONG AN PROVINCE. LOCAL FORCE ACTIVITY IS PREDOMINANT IN TAN TRU DISTRICT (EAST OF THE PROVINCE CAPITAL OF TAN AN), AND NVA MAIN FORCES ARE ACTIVE IN THU THUA AND BEN LUC DISTRICTS.

A-1 FIGHTERS ALOFT EARLY APRIL 17 SPOTTED ARTILLERY FLASHES NORTHEAST OF BIEN HOA. THE FIGHTERS ATTACKED AND REPORTEDLY DESTROYED THREE GUNS. FOUR ROUNDS IMPACTED ON BIEN HOA AIRBASE ABOUT THAT TIME, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN NO FURTHER INCOMING ROUNDS.

THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF ABF'S AND MINOR CONTACTS AROUND PHAN THIET IN THE PAST 24 HOURS. A VNAF C-119 WAS SHOT DOWN, APPARENTLY BY SMALL ARMS FIRE SOUTH OF PHAN RANG ABOUT 0800 HOURS APRIL 17.

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INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM A NUMBER OF SOURCES INDICATE THAT A MULTI-REGIMENTAL SIZE NVA FORCE IS BUILDING UP IN THE LONG KHANH AREA. THIS FORCE WILL EXPLOIT THE BREAKUP OF GVN FORCES IN THE XUAN LOC AREA AND DRIVE ON BIEN HOA. THE EASTERN DEFENSES OF BIEN HOA ARE BEING UPGRADED BY THE ADDITION OF THE 2ND MARINE BRIGADE. THE 1ST BRIGADE DEPLOYED TO AREA LAST WEEK.

MR3 HQS IS ALSO MARSHALLING HELICOPTERS AND OTHER TRANSPORT TO

EVACUATE TROOPS FROM PHAN THIET, BINH THUAN PROVINCE. THESE
TROOPS, WILL BE REDEPLOYED TO NEW POSITIONS IN MR3.

3. MR4

THE SITUATION IN THE DELTA REMAINED SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME
DURING THE PAST 24 HOURS. THE CENTER OF ACTIVITY REMAINED DINH
TUONG, WHERE THERE WERE NUMEROUS LIGHT SHELLINGS AND CONTAE
TS.

IN ONE INCIDENT, ROUTE 4 WAS CRATERED, RESULTING IN TRAFFIC
BEING HALTED.

WARNING--SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED/
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